REMARKS

It is requested that the time for responding to the Office Action be extended two months, to August 13, 2002. A check is attached to cover the $400.00 extension fee. Please charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 22-0261.

Claims 3 to 7 are pending in this application. Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested in view of this amendment and the following remarks.

The Examiner, in paragraph 2 of the Office Action, indicates that the allowance of claim 3 is being withdrawn in view of the new interpretation of the claims and newly found reference, Dietz, II (US Patent No. 5,704,835). It is noted, however, that claim 3 is not rejected on Dietz, II.

The Examiner, in paragraph 3a of the Office Action, rejects claims 3, 6-7 under 35 U.S.C.103(a) as being unpatentable over Okada (US Patent No. 4,715,604 – referred to hereinafter as Okada'604). The Examiner's indication is as follows.

As per claim 3 Okada'604 discloses a slot machine comprising a display and shift or move means for moving or shifting and displaying various kinds of symbols on a set of reels, as shown in FIG. 1. During a game, each reel is caused to rotate and is stopped at one of the possible stop positions in each of which it displays corresponding symbols neighboring to each other, as shown in FIG. 1, to a player through a window or an easy-viewable profile. When all the reels stop, a win decision is made based on the combinations of symbols stopping on the winning line or lines. Okada'604 failed to disclose the use of symbol marks to form a specified symbol mark and wherein said specified symbol mark includes a first semi circular symbol mark formed in the shape of an upper half of a circular configuration and a lower half of a circular configuration to

complete a circle in cooperation with a said first semi-circular symbol mark. However,
<u>using such configuration to display symbols would have been a matter of design choice</u>
(Emphasis added). *It's known to have half of a watermelon being used as a symbol, having*
it arranged and displayed in a way to form a circular shape would have been a matter of
choice. Honestly, the Examiner does not see the difference between the symbol marks of
Okada and the symbol marks of this instant claim limitation since the symbol marks of both
devices are applying the same function, which is to display possible winning combinations.
Besides, a symbol is a symbol and can be represented by anything one wants it to be and
relating or associating that symbol to whatever winning combination to fit one needs
would have been a matter of design choice. Whatever symbols one would decide to use to
display the different possible winning combinations would only be a matter of design
choice. As per claims 6-7, Okada'604 discloses a slot machine comprising a plurality of
rotation reels (see FIG. 1), each having various kinds of symbols (see FIG. 2), 2:22-28,
also see elements (9, 10, 11) in FIG. 2.

In response to the Examiner's rejection, claim 3 has been amended.

The Examiner's rejection is respectfully traversed for the following reasons.

The Examiner indicates that the Okada '604 discloses a slot machine comprising a display and shift or move means for moving or shifting and displaying various kinds of symbols on a set of reels, and use of symbol marks to form a specified symbol mark including a first semi-circular symbol mark formed in the shape of an upper half of a circular configuration and a lower half of a circular configuration to complete a circle in cooperation with the semi-circular symbol mark would have been a matter of design choice.

The game machine defined in claim 3 as amended comprises: shift and display

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means for shifting and displaying various kinds of symbol mark; and shift and display stop means allowing the game player to selectively stop and display the symbol marks shifted and displayed by the shift and display means, a predetermined set of symbol marks stopped and displayed on one of the prize winning lines cause a wining prize to be awarded to a game player. The game machine defined in claim 3 thus constructed is concerned with the problem that it is generally difficult for unskilled game players to operate the stop button with a visual observation of the symbol marks appeared on the observation window so as to stop and display the desired set of the symbol marks on any of the effective prize winning lines of the observation window.

The game machine disclosed in Okada'604, on the other hand, allows the game player just to pull the start lever 6 to start the rotation of the respective reels 2 to 4 simultaneously. After each reel 2 to 4 reaches a constant speed of rotation, each reel 2 to 4 is controlled to stop on a random basis (column 2, lines 29 to 41). Okada '604, however, fails to teach or suggest shift and display stop means allowing the game player to selectively stop and display the symbol marks shifted and displayed by the shift and display means as shown in FIG. 1. The game machine disclosed in Okada '604 does not allow the game player to selectively stop and display the symbol marks shifted and displayed by the shift and display means. Accordingly, the game machine disclosed in Okada '604 does not encounter the problem that it is generally difficult for unskilled game players to operate the stop button with a visual observation of the symbol marks appearing on the observation window so as to stop and display the desired set of the symbol marks on any of the effective prize winning lines of the observation window.

The game machine defined in claim 3 according to the present invention, comprises:

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shift and display means for shifting and displaying various kinds of symbol mark; and shift and display stop means allowing the game player to selectively stop and display the symbol marks shifted and displayed by the shift and display means, a predetermined set of symbol marks stopped and displayed on one of the prize winning lines cause a wining prize to be awarded to a game player, and the predetermined set of symbol marks includes a plurality of symbol marks neighboring to each other to form a specified symbol mark having a diameter approximately equal to the lateral width of the observation windows. The game machine thus constructed makes it easier for unskilled game players to operate the stop button at the right time based on a visual observation of the symbol marks appearing on the observation window so as to stop and display the desired set of the symbol marks on any one of the effective prize winning lines of the observation window.

The game machine defined in claim 3 according to the present invention is similar to the game machine disclosed in Okada'604 in the fact that the game machine disclosed in Okada '604 comprises a display and shift or move means for moving or shifting and displaying various kinds of symbols on a set of reels, but different from the game machine disclosed in Okada'604 in the fact that the game machine defined in claim 3 according to the present invention, comprises shift and display stop means allowing the game player to selectively stop and display the symbol marks shifted and displayed by the shift and display means.

Furthermore, the game machine defined in claim 3 according to the present invention thus constructed has an effect of making it easier for unskilled game players to operate the stop button at the right time in response to a visual observation of the symbol marks appearing on the observation window so as to stop and display the desired set of the symbol

marks on any one of the effective prize winning lines of the observation window. In contrast, the game machine disclosed in Okada'604 does not allow the player to stop the symbol marks and therefore is not concerned with making it easy for unskilled game players to operate the stop button at the right time in response to a visual observation of the symbol marks appearing on the observation window so as to stop and display the desired set of the symbol marks on any one of the effective prize winning lines of the observation window.

For the above reasons, it is submitted that the game machine defined in claim 3 as amended is patentably distinguishable over the game machine disclosed in Okada'604.

The Examiner, in paragraph 3b of the Office Action, indicates that claims 4-5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C.103(a) as being unpatentable over Okada (US Patent No. 5,083,785 – referred to hereinafter as Okada '785) in view of Dietz, II (US Patent No. 5,704,835). The Examiner's indication is as follows.

As per claims 4-5, Okada '785 discloses a slot machine capable of shifting and displaying symbols as shown in FIG. 1. In reference to FIG. 2, Okada '785 further discloses a random generator (25) that generates at random numerical values included in a series of integers ranging from "1" to "4096"; a random number sampler (26) for sampling the numerical values generated by the random number generator, 3:28-48; a storage means (29) for storing table data having a plurality of predetermined reference values, 3:49-50, 4:1-4; a stop control means (36) for controlling the stop of the shift and display means to have a set of symbols stopped and displayed on the basis of the winning state, 4:5-49. As shown in element (29) of FIG. 2, Okada discloses different levels of winning states such as small win, middle or medium win, big win and no win. However, Okada failed to teach more than one small winning state in one game. Dietz, II discloses a

slot machine device wherein the symbol arrangement are configured in a way to provide more than one type of winning state in one game. With an understanding of section 5:30-35 and FIG. 4, if the random number chosen by the microprocessor were a 34, for example, the full symbol in the upper box would be a "bell", the full symbol in the middle box would be an "orange" (35) and the full symbol in the lower box would be an "orange" (36) therefore having that particular symbol neighboring itself and provide whatever winning state that symbol is associated with on two different lines. The same rule would follow if the random chosen number were 1, or 10 or 36, etc. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to provide the symbol arrangement teaching of Dietz in the Okada type in order to allow players to win a more and therefore attract more players.

In response to the Examiner's indication, claims 4 and 5 have been amended to provide better understanding of the present invention.

The Examiner's rejection is respectfully traversed for the reasons explained below.

The Examiner indicates that Okada '785 discloses a slot machine capable of shifting and displaying symbols, a random generator that generates random number values included in a series of integers ranging from "1" to "4096", a random number sampler for randomly sampling <u>a numerical value</u> from the random numbers generated by the random number generator, a storage means for storing table data having a plurality of predetermined reference values, a stop control means for controlling the stop of the shift and display means to have a set of symbols stopped and displayed on the basis of the winning state, which is any one of small win, middle or medium win, big win, and no win.

The Examiner indicates that Dietz, II discloses a slot machine device wherein the symbol arrangements are configured in a way to provide more than one type of winning state

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in one game. The slot machine disclosed in Dietz, II, however uses <u>three random numbers</u> to determine the combination of three full symbols to be displayed in the three columns (column 5, line 15 to 24).

Presumably, the Examiner is contending that the concept of Okada '785 of a slot machine capable of shifting and displaying symbols, which comprises a random generator that generates random number values included in a series of integers ranging from "1" to "4096", a random number sampler for randomly sampling <u>a single numerical value</u> from the random numbers generated by the random number generator, a storage means for storing table data having a plurality of predetermined reference values, and a stop control means for controlling the stop of the shift and display means to have a set of symbols stopped and displayed on the basis of the winning state, which is any one of small win, middle or medium win, big win, and no win, can be combined in some way with the concept of Dietz, II that the symbol arrangements are configured in a way to provide more than one type of winning state in one game. Dietz, II, however, discloses that <u>three random numbers</u> are used to determine the combination of three full symbols to be displayed in the three columns. Accordingly, if the teaching of Okada '785 were used in combination with the features of the slot machine disclosed in Dietz, II, the symbol arrangements would be configured in a way to provide more than one type of winning state <u>in not one game, but three games</u> because of the fact that the random number sampler of the slot machine disclosed in Okada '785 randomly samples <u>a single numerical value</u> from the random numbers generated by the random number generator <u>in one game</u>. It is submitted that there is no obvious way of combining Okada '785 with Dietz, II to arrive at a system in which a plurality of prize winning states are determined on the basis of a single sampled random number. In the game machine defined in claim 4

according to the present invention, the winning state determining means is operative to determine a plurality of small prize winning states associated with one of the random number segments corresponding to the sampled random number in one game. This feature makes it possible for the small prize winning states to be requested in one game unless the big prize winning state or the medium prize winning state is requested. Likewise, in the game machine defined in claim 5 according to the present invention, the winning state determining means is operative to determine a plurality of small prize winning states associated with one of the random number segments corresponding to the sampled random number in one game and this makes it possible for the small prize winning states to be requested in one game.

For the above-stated reasons, it is submitted that it would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to provide the symbol arrangement teaching of Dietz, II in the game machine disclosed in Okada'785 to provide the game machine defined in any one of claims 4 and 5.

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that the game machine defined in claims 4 and 5 is patentably distinguishable over the game machine disclosed in Okada'785 in view of Dietz, II.

The Examiner, in paragraph 3a of the Office Action, indicates that claims 6-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Okada'604. Claims 6-7 are dependent on claim 3 which is patentably distinguishable from the prior art as discussed above and claims 6-7 should also be allowed as being dependent from an allowable claim. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of these claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) is, therefore, respectfully requested.

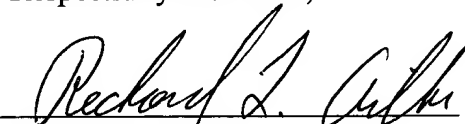New claim 8 is dependent on Claim 3 and is allowable over the prior art for the same

reasons as Claim 3. New Claims 9 and 10 are dependent on Claim 4 and are allowable over the prior art for the same reasons as claim 4.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the claims by the current amendment. The attachment is captioned "Version with markings to show changes made."

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the present invention defined in the claims is patentably distinguishable over the prior art of record and that the present application is thus in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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In the Claims:

Please amend claims 3-5 as follows:

3.   (Amended) A game machine, comprising: shift and display means for shifting and displaying various kinds of symbol marks, said shift and display means is partly constituted by a plurality of observation windows, and having prize winning lines formed thereon; and shift and display stop means allowing the game player to selectively stop and display said symbol marks shifted and displayed by said shift and display means,

in which a predetermined set of symbol marks stopped and displayed on one of said prize winning lines cause a wining prize to be awarded to a game player, said predetermined set of symbol marks including a plurality of symbol marks neighboring to each other to form a specified symbol mark having a diameter approximately equal to the lateral width of said observation windows.~~, said shift and display means is partly constituted by a plurality of observation windows, and said specified symbol mark includes a first semi-circular symbol mark formed in the shape of an upper half of a circular configuration having a diameter approximately equal to the lateral width of said observation window of said shift and display means, and a second semi-circular symbol mark formed in the shape of a lower half of a circular configuration and neighboring to said first semi-circular symbol mark to complete a circle in cooperation with said first semi-circular symbol mark.~~

4.   (Amended) A game machine, comprising: shift and display means for shifting and displaying various kinds of symbol marks; a random number generator for generating random numbers divided into a plurality of random number segments; a random number sampler for

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sampling a random number from the random numbers generated by said random number generator; storage means for storing table data having a plurality of predetermined reference values defining said random number segments; winning state determining means for determining a winning state on the basis of the sampled random number using said reference values of said table data; stop control means for controlling the stop of said shift and display means to have a set of symbol marks stopped and displayed on the basis of the winning state determined by said winning state determining means,

in which said winning states include small, medium and big prize winning states,

said table data includes one or more random number segments respectively corresponding to one ore more small prize groups each constituted by a plurality of small prize winning states,

said winning state determining means is operative to determine a plurality of small prize winning states associated with one of said random number segments ~~of~~ corresponding to said sampled random numbers in one game, thereby making it possible for said small prize winning states to be requested in one game unless said big prize winning state or said medium prize winning state is requested, and

said stop control means is operative to control said shift and display means to have a set of symbol marks including a specified symbol mark representative of said small prize winning states stopped and displayed on one of said prize winning lines of said shift and display means when said plurality of small prize winning states are requested.

5. (Amended) A game machine, comprising: shift and display means for shifting and displaying various kinds of symbol marks; a random number generator for generating random

numbers divided into a plurality of random number segments; a random number sampler for sampling a random number from the random numbers generated by said random number generator; storage means for storing table data having a plurality of predetermined reference values defining said random number segments specific to a game condition; winning state determining means for determining a winning state on the basis of the sampled random number using said reference values of said table data; stop control means for controlling the stop of said shift and display means to have a set of symbol marks stopped and displayed on the basis of the winning state determined by said winning state determining means,

in which said winning states include small, medium and big prize winning states,

said table data includes one or more random number segments respectively corresponding to one ore more small prize groups each constituted by a plurality of small prize winning states,

said winning state determining means is operative to determine a plurality of small prize winning states associated with one of said random number segments ~~of~~ corresponding to said sampled random numbers in one game, thereby making it possible for said small prize winning states to be requested in one game, and

said plurality of said small prize winning states to be requested in one game are changed in accordance with said game condition.